

**Great War Stories: Remembering the sacrifices of those with SC connections who served their country 100 years ago.**

Published in the Timaru Herald 9 December 2017

**Private Michael HAMILTON, No.47328**

**By Teresa Scott**

Michael Hamilton was the son of Irish-born parents, John and Catherine (believed née McIntyre) Hamilton, of John Street, Temuka. He was born on 5 April 1885 and baptised at Temuka. Good fortune came Michael's way in August 1902, when he won first prize in the art union held in connection with St Mary's Church, Christchurch – a handsome oil painting valued at thirty guineas. The following April this large painting of a mountain scene by a well-known artist was displayed in a Temuka shop window.

When Michael enlisted on 20 April 1917, he was working as a teamster for T. Sugrue, Belfield. His mother, Mrs John Hamilton, was recorded as his next-of-kin. Later it was noted that she was deceased and the name amended to Mr John Hamilton, father. He said that a will had been made and was held by Mrs P. Hamilton, Temuka, who would have been the widow of his brother Patrick. No will was probated. He stated that one person (his father) was absolutely dependent on him. Having embarked on 9 June, six weeks into the trip he was admitted to the Willochra's hospital, with infection, and on arrival in the United Kingdom he was admitted to Codford. In November he was discharged to Sling and on discharge from there in December he commenced duty. It was February 1918 when he proceeded overseas and joined a battalion at Rouen.

The death of Private Michael Hamilton, 47328, Canterbury Infantry Regiment, 33 years, of Temuka, was reported in Casualty List No. 952 published in mid September – killed in action on 24 August 1918, a victim of the heavy fighting on the Somme, France. He was buried in Grevillers British Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France, along with 150 other New Zealanders. His medals were to be sent to his father but as he had died in 1920, the medals (British War Medal and Victory Medal), plaque and scroll were sent to his brother Joseph, possibly his only surviving sibling.

At the January 1919 meeting, the Mayor, on behalf of the Temuka Borough Council, moved a vote of condolence to the father and family (after it was incorrectly reported that a third son had been killed at the front). The motion was carried in silence, members standing. His brother John Hamilton was killed in action in 1917; his youngest brother Joseph Daniel Hamilton also served and was wounded in World War One.

His name is inscribed on the Timaru Memorial Wall, the Temuka RSA Roll of Honour, the Temuka War Memorial, and on the St Joseph's Church Temuka Memorial. The St Joseph's Church, Temuka, Memorial was unveiled after a Memorial Service on 25 April 1922.

This is part of the SCROLL project. You can find SCROLL stories, hosted by the South Canterbury Museum, at [museum.timaru.govt.nz/scroll](https://museum.timaru.govt.nz/scroll)